Differential Reinforcement Of High Rates (DRH)

Caveland Regional Autism Team
Improving Services for Autistic Children

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Differential Reinforcement of High Rates of Behavior (DRH) occurs when the delivery of reinforcement is contingent on responses occurring at a rate higher than a predetermined criterion. DRH schedules produce a high rate of responding.

What is a DRH?
- A specific schedule of reinforcement.
- Used to increase the rate of desired behaviors.
- Increases appropriate behaviors gradually.
- Criterion chosen should be within the student's ability.

Why should I use a DRH?
- Positive approach to increase the rate of desired behaviors
- Maintains behavior
- Inexpensive
- Highly structured

Guidelines for a DRH Program
- Define the target behavior in measureable, observable terms (e.g. use action words).
- Gather data for at least three days– Baseline must be recorded to measure the rate of the target behavior.
- Determine the average number of responses based upon baseline data.
- Use the average rate to serve as the initial DRH criterion.
- Establish at least two highly motivating reinforcers (e.g. *Thomas the Train* movie, computer time).
- The student will only be given these reinforcers when s/he emits the target behavior at or above the established criterion.
- Prohibit the student's access to these reinforcers at school unless the limit is met.

Implementing a DRH Program
- Determine a time period that is feasible throughout the day. (E.g. 15 min, 30 min, class period, etc.)
- Inform the student the number of behaviors to meet criterion.
- Consider providing visual supports (tokens, picture representations of reward) for students with disabilities.
- Provide a token or visual representation of reinforcer each time the behavior occurs.
- At the end of the time period, provide the student with the reward if the criterion is met.
- If the criterion is not met, inform the student that they did not earn the reward this time, but may do so next time.
- Implement daily and consistently.
- Gradually increase the criterion as the student makes progress.

Examples

Increasing classroom participation
Sarah participates in classroom discussion by answering questions an average of one time per 90 minute reading block. The criterion established is two answers per reading block. Sarah is told that that she will earn a token if she answers two or more questions per reading block. At the end of the reading block, Sarah is provided her reinforcer for answering two questions. Over time, the criterion may be increased to three or more answers.

Increasing task completion
Jacob completes an average of three shoebox tasks per hour. The criterion established is four tasks per hour. Jacob is nonverbal and loves *Thomas the Train* movies. For each task he completes, Jacob earns one train card. If he earns four train cards in one hour, Jacob may watch a *Thomas the Train* movie for 5 minutes.

Resources

Alberto, P.A. & Troutman, A.C. (1995). *Applied Behavior Analysis for teachers* (Fourth Edition). Columbus, OH: Prentice Hall.

Cooper, J.O., Heron, T.E., & Heward, W.L. (2007). *Applied Behavior Analysis* (Second Edition). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.

Lee. D.L. & Axelrod, S. (2005). *Behavior Modification: Basic principles* (Third Edition). Austin, TX: ProEd, Inc.

Sulzer-Azaroff, B. & Mayer G.R. (1991). *Behavior Analysis for Lasting Change*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.